

How-To Books

Grade K
Unit 3
INFORMATION

WRITING TO TEACH OTHERS



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firsthand
HEINEMANN
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS

Overview for Kindergarten Unit 3, How-To Books: Writing to Teach Others

Session/Minilesson		Conferring and Small-Group Work		Mid-Workshop Teaching		Share
Bend I: Writing How-To Books, Step by Step						
1	Writers Study the Kind of Writing They Plan to Make	Welcome Approximations, Inviting Children into the New Work	Help Children Carry On with Independence	Compare How-To Writing with Familiar True Stories and Notice Differences		
2	Writers Use What They Already Know: Touching and Telling the Steps across the Pages	Varying Small-Group Methods and Structures	Writers Need Not Sound Out Every Word; Some Words They Know in a Snap	Checking Your Writing against the Anchor Chart		
3	Writers Become Readers, Asking, "Can I Follow This?"	Anticipating that Some Children Will Need Scaffolds and Supports to Access High-Level Work	Writers Say It a Different Way if a Partner Doesn't Understand	Envisioning the Steps in a How-To Book and Revising if They Don't Make Sense		
4	Writers Answer a Partner's Questions	Conferring with Writing Partners	Writers Not Only Revise Old Books; They Also Write New Books	Getting the Most Out of Extended Writing Time		
5	Writers Label Their Diagrams to Teach Even More Information	Building Vocabulary and Developing Language	Writers Use the Detailed Words in Their Diagrams to Write Sentences that Explain Their Steps	Writers Read Their Writing with Expression		
6	Letter to Teachers: Writers Write as Many Books as They Can					
7	Writers Reflect and Set Goals to Create Their Best Information Writing	Helping Writers Keep Everything They've Learned in Mind as They Work	Writers Want Feedback on Their Hard Work	Getting How-To Books into Readers' Hands		
Bend II: Using Mentor Texts for Inspiration: Revising Old How-To Books and Writing New Ones						
8	Writers Emulate Features of Informational Writing Using a Mentor Text	Using Mentor Texts to Confer	Collecting Ideas from Mentor Texts: Using Capital Letters for Emphasis	We Can All Be Mentor Authors		
9	Writing for Readers: Using the Word <i>You</i>	Helping Children Apply and Transfer Strategies for Spelling Trickier Words	Writers Are Resilient and Work to Solve Their Own Problems	Noticing More Ways Writers Talk to Their Readers		
10	How-To Book Writers Picture Each Step and Then Choose Exactly Right Words	Supporting Students Who Need Extra Help Choosing Exactly Right Words	Partners Can Help Each Other Revise for Clarity by Listening to and Acting Out Each Other's Books	Writers Practice Picturing a Step and Choosing Exactly Right Words		
11	Elaboration in How-To Books: Writers Guide Readers with Warnings, Suggestions, and Tips	Coaching Students to Use Many Revision Strategies, Not Just One	Adding Advice and Warnings for Your Reader	Writers Use Particular Words to Convey Warnings, Suggestions, or Tips		
12	"Balance on One Leg Like a Flamingo": Using Comparisons to Give Readers Clear Directions	Gathering a Group of Writers with Similar Needs	Writers Can Use New Strategies to Revise Old Work	Writers Celebrate all They've Learned from Mentor Authors		
Bend III: Keeping Readers in Mind						
13	Writers Write How-To Books about Things They Learn throughout the Day and from Books	Coaching Conferences	Getting Ideas for How-To Books	Thinking about Potential How-To Books Across the Day		
14	Writing a Series or Collection of How-To Books to Teach Others Even More about a Topic	Helping Students Stay Independently Focused on Writing Work	Turning a Series of How-To Books into One Big How-To Chapter Book	Making Sure All Books in a Collection Go Together		
15	Writers Can Write Introductions and Conclusions to Help Their Readers	Teaching the Writer, Not the Writing	When Necessary, Writers Unstick Themselves by Skipping the Introduction	Writing Conclusions		
16	Using Everything You Know to Make Their How-To Books Easy to Read	Using the Information Writing Rubric (and/or Benchmark Samples) to Guide Conferring and Small-Group Work	Writers Look Back through Old Work to be Sure They've Finished All They Can	Celebrating Finishing the Class How-To Book		
Bend IV: Giving How-To Books as Gifts						
17	How-To Books Make Wonderful Gifts!	Supporting Students as They Revise Books Selected for Publication	Choosing a Piece to Give as a Gift	Self-Assessment and Goal Setting		
18	Preparing for the Publishing Party: Writers Do Their Best Work Now to Share It Later	Differentiating the Final Work of the Unit	Writers Add On to Their Own Checklists	Reading Aloud		
19	Letter to Teachers: Publishing Celebration: Writers Are Teachers					



Session 15

Writers Can Write Introductions and Conclusions to Help Their Readers

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers clarify a topic new to readers by writing introductions and conclusions.



GETTING READY

- One student-made how-to book about a topic that will require background information to understand (e.g., "How to Play Angry Birds") (see Connection)
- Class text, "How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich" as well as blank pages to add on (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- Students' writing folders (see Share)
- One child's exemplary ending (see Share)

FOR THE PAST TWO SESSIONS, you've emphasized the idea that writers of how-to books give their readers new information. You've helped children see themselves as experts on familiar topics, as well as brand-new things they've recently learned in school. And in the last session, you helped your students learn to linger on a topic, creating many how-to books and maybe even stapling them together to create a chapter book. Think of it—chapter books! How very grown-up your kindergartners are becoming!

When you sit down to talk with your kindergartners about their interests—things about which they have a lot of information to share—it is inevitable that you'll encounter pop culture references that you haven't a clue about. From Pokémon cards and SpongeBob SquarePants, to Angry Birds. The list goes on, and as fads come and fads go, so too will the topics that your children are dying to write about. Now it is probably time to let your kindergartners in on something that is bound to surprise them. You'll gather them close and break the news to them. "Kids," you might say. "This might surprise you, but I have to tell you. Some of your topics are new to a lot of people. Not everybody knows how to play Angry Birds. In fact, some people might not even know what Angry Birds is! Can you believe that?"

In this session you'll invite a child to play the role of the reader of the class how-to book, and together, you and your class will write an introduction that helps that reader understand the topic better. This teaching move, among others in this lesson, is one that will carry into other lessons. Inviting kids to act out the roles of reader and writer helps make the concept of audience more concrete. We so often refer to readers assuming that kids will know what we mean when we say things like, "Make things easier for the reader to understand," or "easier for the reader to read," or to "teach the reader more information." Have a child pretend to be the actual reader, or do it yourself, so kids can see the reader at work, trying to understand, with their very own eyes.

You will notice that this session teaches more than one strategy for writing an introduction. The teaching part of this minilesson introduces one strategy: writing an introduction that teaches the reader information. The active engagement builds on that initial teaching

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.K.2, W.K.5, W.1.2, RI.K.1, SL.K.1, L.K.1, L.K.2, L.K.6

point by adding in that writers also try to make an introduction interesting by putting in where the idea came from or why the topic is important.

"Inviting kids to act out the roles of reader and writer helps make the concept of audience more concrete."

This work stands on the shoulders of the Common Core State Standards for informational writing for kindergarten and first grade. We find it helpful to think long term about children's writing. Take a look ahead to first- and second-grade standards, and you'll see that there is plenty of work that kindergartners could get started on right away, rather than waiting to tackle. When we introduce some of the work that lies ahead early on, we open up the opportunity for children to give things a try, to approximate. Though their attempts will be less than perfect, the early start will give kids multiple chances

to revisit the work across this year and the next, each time around becoming more independent. If you teach children to write introductions for their how-to books now, they will easily be able to meet the Common Core State Standards (which include writing an introduction) for informational writing by the end of first grade.

For now, you'll teach children to write very simple introductions that invite the reader to learn about the topic and perhaps give some necessary facts or a definition. There will be plenty of time in the months and years ahead for children to learn the specific ways authors introduce and conclude a text. For today, the most important thing will be for your kindergartners to grasp that they are expected to include an introduction or a beginning of some sort in their how-to text. We suggest splitting up your teaching of introductions and conclusions, teaching one in the minilesson and perhaps adding on the other as a mid-workshop teaching point or a share. Today will be a big step for your young writers: to realize that they know about topics that others have never heard of, that they truly are teachers to the people who read their work. Enjoy teaching this lesson, and let your children's approximations be fuel for ideas for future lessons and conferring.

Writers Can Write Introductions and Conclusions to Help Their Readers

CONNECTION

Show students that introductions are necessary by explaining that you, along with many other grown-ups, have never even heard of a familiar fad that is currently popular with your class.

"Writers, this morning, Preston couldn't wait for me to read his 'How to Play Angry Birds' book. He ran up to me, saying, 'Look! I wrote a book at home!' Then he read it, and this is how it went. 'First stretch the bird back. Then you let the bird go. Then you see the bird go when it is crossing.'"

I stopped and gave the kids a look of exaggerated confusion. "What? I do not understand! You have to stretch a bird? What are you talking about?" I smiled, knowing it would sound funny to the class, and kids laughed.

"Writers, you won't believe this, but before reading Preston's book, I had never even heard of Angry Birds." I paused for dramatic effect, and the children let out a collective gasp of incredulity. "Preston had to explain to me that Angry Birds is a game that you play on a phone or a computer, and the birds are just pretend. You use a pretend slingshot to toss the birds and knock down bricks so that the pigs hiding under the bricks will pop. The goal of the game is to pop all the pigs. Phew. After he explained what the game was, everything else made perfect sense!"

"So Preston wrote a little introduction for people like me, who don't know about Angry Birds. It goes like this. 'Angry Birds is a super game to play. You play it on the computer or an iPad.'"

Angry Birds is a super game to play. You play it on the computer or an iPad.

First stretch the bird back.

Next you let the bird go.

Then you see the bird go when it is crossing.

◆ COACHING

If you and your class have never heard of Angry Birds, choose a different example to use for this lesson. The topic is less important—it is the teaching that matters.

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that writers of how-to books often write a special page to introduce their books to help their readers understand their topic—just like Preston helped me understand his book. How-to writers often pretend that the people who will read the book have never even heard of the topic, and then they write an introduction page to give the readers some information or facts so that the rest of the how-to book will make more sense."

TEACHING

Invite a student to role-play being an uninformed reader, and recruit the class to help generate an introduction that provides background knowledge.

"Class, will you help me to write an introduction for our 'How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich' book? First, we need a reader. Preston? Will you be our reader?" Preston agreed and came to the front of the meeting area to sit next to me.

"Okay, Preston. Pretend that you have never even heard of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich before. Are you ready?" Preston nodded. I read aloud just the first few pages of our class how-to book.

How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

1. *Get the jar of peanut butter. Be careful you don't drop the jar!*
2. *Open it, and using your knife, scoop out a knife-full of peanut butter. Be sure the knife is clean.*
3. *Spread the peanut butter over one piece of bread.*

Stopping here, I said, "Preston, if you didn't even know what a PB&J was, would that make sense? Would you know what to do?" Preston shook his head, no. I turned to the rest of the class, "What do you think?"

Model writing a very simple introduction, leaving out crucial information.

Holding up a fresh sheet of paper, I said to the class, "I think we better add a page to our book that tells our reader, Preston, what a PB&J actually is. That way, before he reads the steps, he'll know what he's making. Hmm." I paused, thinking. "Got it. I could write, 'This book will teach you how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.' " I gestured across the page to show that I was planning to write this. "Preston, now do you know what a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is? Are you ready for the steps?" Preston shook his head. "Nooo! You still didn't tell me."

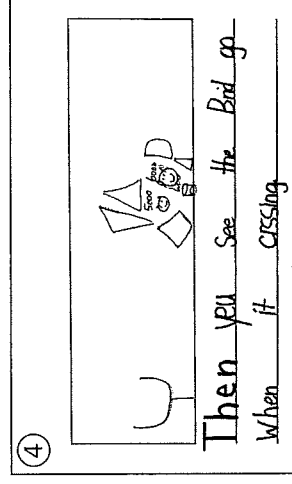
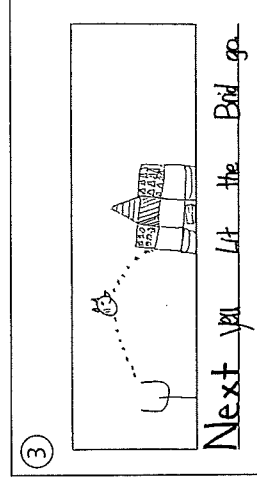
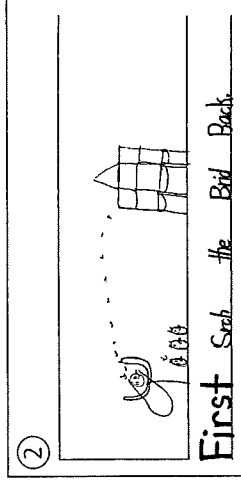
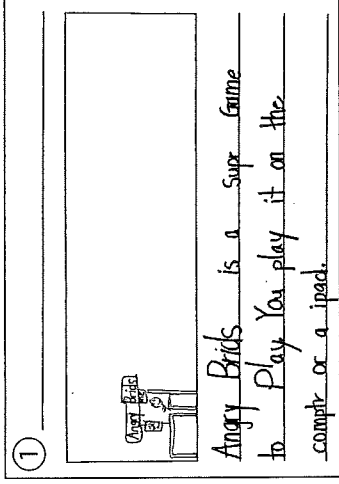


FIG. 15-1 Preston writes an introduction for his book on angry birds.

"Oh, okay. No problem. Let me try again. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a delicious and easy to make sandwich made with bread, peanut butter, and jelly." I looked at the class and Preston. "Is that better?" The class agreed, and I quickly wrote our introduction across the page and added it to the class how-to book.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Recruit children to help write an even better introduction for the class book.

"Writers, this introduction is pretty good, but I think it could be even better. When Preston told me about his how-to book this morning, he was so excited about it. He really made me want to read it! Maybe we could try writing our introduction so that it really makes people want to read it, too.

"I'm going to let you in on a secret. Writers have a few tricks for getting people to really want to read their books. They might tell people where their idea came from or why it is important information for people to know. Will you turn and tell your partner what you think we could say to make our introduction even better? What could we say to get readers to really want to read our book?"

After children discuss, elicit a few responses.

I motioned to Nicole to start. "It's important to know how to make peanut butter and jelly so you can eat it for lunch." "Yes, that introduction will certainly make somebody who is looking for ideas for lunch want to read our book, Nicole," I said. "And it certainly lets everyone know why this how-to book is important."

"It's important to know how to make peanut butter and jelly so you can eat it when you don't like anything else," Damien added. "Yes. That will definitely make people want to read our book," I acknowledged.

"Yummy, yummy. Do you want to make something yummy?" Cooper called out, breaking the pattern. We all laughed a little. "Yes, Cooper! That makes the book sound really interesting and fun to read, doesn't it? Let's add that to our introduction!" I quickly added a sentence to the introduction page. The book now read:

How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

yummy, yummy. Do you want to make something yummy? A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a delicious and easy to make sandwich made with bread, peanut butter, and jelly.

1. Get the jar of peanut butter. Be sure that you don't drop the jar.
2. Open it, and using your knife, scoop out a knife-full of peanut butter. Be sure the knife is clean.
3. Spread the peanut butter over one piece of bread
4. Open the jelly jar and use your knife to scoop out some jelly.

In this session, we use the active engagement to build on the initial teaching point, lifting the work that we shared in the first part of the mini-lesson. This makes it possible to teach a whole repertoire of strategies in one lesson rolling out little tips one at a time.

You will want to spend some time during interactive writing adding the last steps to this book. Not all writing needs to happen during writing workshop.

5. Spread the jelly over the other piece of bread.

6. Squish the two pieces of bread together. Make sure the peanut butter and jelly are on the inside!

Debrief in ways that emphasize the parts of this work that can transfer to other books, on other days.

"Writers, you've all found a way to write a sentence or two that could go at the start of our how-to book as an introduction. You can let readers know where your idea came from, or why the book is important to read, or even tell your readers a bit of information, so that they won't get confused like I was when I first read Preston's *Angry Bird* book."

LINK

Rally writers to move beyond the topic of today's lesson, suggesting several possible ways that writers could spend their time today.

"Writers, today you should be doing everything that how-to writers do. For a few minutes, perhaps early on, you might try writing an introduction, but that will take a few minutes, not a whole day. So why don't I list the sort of work you might do after that, and if I say something that you were thinking you would do after you write a quick introduction, get up and get started.

"Some of you are probably going to reread the book you were writing yesterday and then keep going in it. If so, get busy." A few kids skipped off.

"Some of you will be figuring out what your next how-to book will be about. You might decide to look through the museum of objects and books at your tables, just to get some ideas. If a book says, 'How to Make Jello,' that book might give you the idea for writing about making brownies or French toast. If you will be starting new books, off you go." Another contingent left the meeting area.

"And some of you might decide that you want to write introductions for *all* of your old how-to books before you start another how-to book, so that your readers won't be confused, like I was when Preston read me his *Angry Birds* book. Remember, there might be people who have never even heard of your topic! The rest of you, what will you be doing?"



By listing off options for writing time and asking students to choose what they will be doing today before they leave the meeting area, we hope to guard against students getting to their writing spots and just sitting there, not sure what their plan for the day will be. This type of transition also allows students who are unsure of what they need to do to remain in the meeting area after others disperse, to receive additional support from us.



Teaching the Writer, Not the Writing

THE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY'S LESSON—and this entire bend—is that your children are writing to *teach* people. There will be many children who understand this well and invent ways to grab readers' attention and fill their how-to books to the brim with information and details. There will also be pockets of children who are working hard on their books but struggle with the concept that someone will indeed read their book and that this someone may or may not be familiar with the topic of the book. You'll be tempted to linger with these students, trying again and again to get them to write introductions that provide a definition or some facts, only to wind up with introductions that restate the title: "This book is about Nintendo." Or "This book is about Nintendo. A Nintendo is like DS or like a Wii." Try as you might, some of your kindergarteners might not produce the informative introductions that you imagined.

Fear not, for this is a difficult concept, even for adult writers and readers. Sometimes the topics that are the most familiar are the hardest to write about with clarity because it is so difficult to imagine *not* knowing. My advice is to be sure that you are prioritizing the intentions of the writer, *not* the day's minilesson. Just as children benefit from revisiting things we've taught long ago, so too is it helpful to remind ourselves of things we've learned in other contexts. Remembering to teach the writer, not the writing, is crucial. While we may be tempted to spend lots of energy guiding children to do whatever we've just taught, we need to remind ourselves to put the child's intentions and individual learning trajectory ahead of anything else.

It is important as well to make explicit to the children you are conferring with that whatever you've just taught them in conferences or small groups is just one thing among many that they can be working on. As you wrap up your conferences or small groups and link to ongoing work, think about what you have taught and be explicit with your students about how to use their new learning in context. Are you setting the child up with a strategy or set of strategies to use in addition to all the minilessons you have taught? Or does what you have taught serve as an accommodation for the child—something to use *in place* of what you've been showing in minilessons—such as introducing a more highly scaffolded paper choice that the rest of the class is not using.

Keeping clear conferring notes is so important. Our teaching is much "stickier" and more powerful when we begin conferences by following up on earlier teaching. One research question you ask children might always be, "Last time we worked together I taught you . . . Can you show me a place where you're still doing that?"

If you plan to teach about writing conclusions within the share today, you'll want to confer into this idea with one child so that you have an example to show the class.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING When Necessary, Writers Unstick Themselves by Skipping the Introduction

"Writers, eyes on me." I waited. "A few of you are stuck over how to write an introduction. Here is a really important tip: writers figure out ways to unstick themselves. Can you think about how you could unstick yourself if you are doing nothing because you don't know what to write on page 1, on your introduction page? Think really hard. You are sitting with a blank book, stuck. You are thinking, 'Oh no, oh no, I do not know how to write my page 1. Oh no, oh no.' What can you do to unstick yourself?"

I called on Oliver, who was practically climbing out of his chair. "Skip it?" he said.

"Absolutely. Just skip it! If you can't think of your page 1, then skip it and move on to the rest of the book. You can always come back later, maybe with your partner helping, and decide what to say and then you can just slip an introduction page into the front of a finished how-to booklet. Some how-to books have introductions, and some don't. You can decide what to work on, all by yourself."



SHARE

Writing Conclusions

Using the work of one child, explain that in addition to introductions that get readers ready to learn, how-to book writers can write conclusions that let readers know the book is over.

"Oh, my goodness, you have got to race over here to see what Vivian did today. Bring the book you are working on and a pen and come quickly." Once the children had arrived, I called Vivian forward and said, "Vivian was really thinking about her readers. She got to the end of her book about Beyblades, and she thought, 'Hey, I think I will write a little message to my reader at the end of my book. That way the reader will know that the book is over.' She decided that to have good manners as a writer she could say a thank-you or a good-bye at the end of her book. So she ended her book this way. Listen." (See Figure 15-2 on following page.)

Vivian, sitting up proudly, read, "Have fun playing!"

Beyblades are a game with pieces that crash into each other.

First you need the ripper and take the Beyblade.

Next if you want to have two player you can have two player.

Then you pick up the thing.


Then you say "Beyblade let it rip."

Last you play with your friend.

Have fun playing!

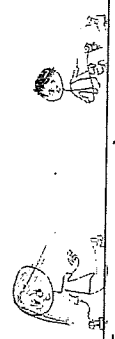
"Nice job, Vivian. Writers, let's all try Vivian's strategy, right now. Quick as a wink, take out a how-to book you feel is almost done, and write *your* last page." As children worked, I looked over their shoulders, sometimes reading their endings aloud to help other children get ideas.

①



Beyblad are a game ^{with} that each
in to each other

④

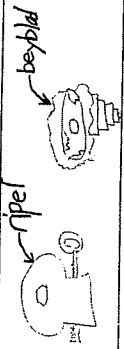


Then you pick up betting.

⑦

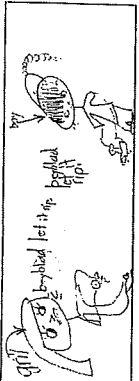
Have fun play
Have fun playing!

②



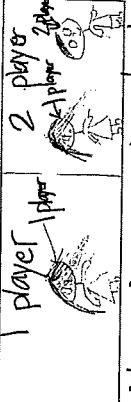
First you need the riper and
take the beyblad.

⑤



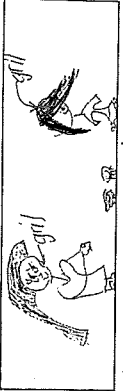
Then you say beyblad let it
rip.

③



Next if you want to have two
player you can have two player.

⑥



Last you play with your final

FIG. 15-2 Vivian writes a conclusion for her book on Beyblades.